

# **Small School Districts in Washington State**



## **CHARACTERISTICS, EXPERIENCES, SUCSESSES, & CHALLENGES**

**PRESENTATION TO  
HOUSE EDUCATION  
COMMITTEE  
JANUARY 19, 2015**

**JIM KOWALKOWSKI,  
SUPERINTENDENT - DAVENPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT  
DIRECTOR - RURAL EDUCATION CENTER**



- Davenport School District

- 575 students
- K-12 district
- Home of the Gorillas!



- Rural Education Center

- Statewide cooperative of over 70 small and rural districts and several educational organizations, including ESD's.
- Program support received from the College of Education at Washington State University

# Small Districts



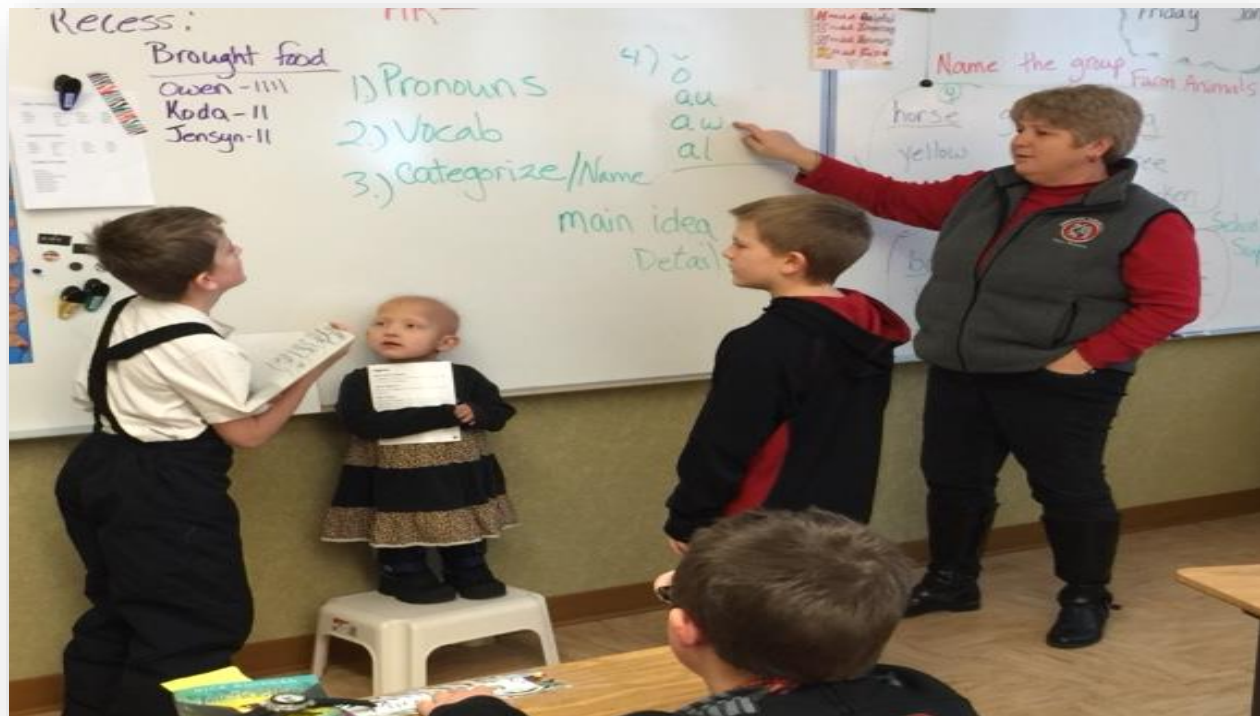
- ✓ **Thank you** for this opportunity
- ✓ Four years ago a large group of us were here to encourage this committee to not “reorganize” school districts



# Small, yet Mighty!



## Lessons from Evelyn!



# Washington's Small School Districts



- Lessons from Evelyn

- We may be small, but we are mighty!
- We sometimes need some extra support
  - ESD's
  - Small High Funding
- We are strong
- We offer comprehensive programs for our students in a safe and caring environment
- We have tremendous community support
- We offer many amazing programs for our students



## Washington's Small School Districts

# Often the “Center of the Community”

- ✓ School facilities are used heavily by the community
- ✓ The school is often the “designated shelter” during emergencies





## Washington's Small School Districts



# Tremendous Community Pride for Our Small School Districts



## Washington's Small School Districts

# Davenport High School Hall Lockers

✓ No locks!





# Washington's Small School Districts



## STEM Opportunities are offered for students

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### Trout Lake Robotics team goes to Nationals

on April 28, 2011 [Leave a Comment](#)



From the foot of Mt. Adams to the Midwest, the school in Trout Lake is sending its first ever robotics team to the national championships in St. Louis this week.

Only about 60 students are enrolled in the high school. Nine kids are on the team.

Principal Doug Dearden says his school was by far the smallest competing at the regional competition in Oregon last month, and they'll likely be competing against teams from much larger schools again.

This is the first year Trout Lake has sponsored a robotics team. Corporate sponsors include a sand and gravel company, a rafting company, and the high-tech company Insitu, which makes drones for the U.S. military.

# Washington's Small School Districts

✓ Teachers usually have many “preps”

Teacher	Per 1	Per 2	Per 3	Per 4	Per 5	Per 6	Per 7
Mr. Fisk	Biology	Physical Science	Chemistry	Anatomy / Physiology	Prep	COE Biology	Weight Lifting
Mrs. Parsons	Culminating Projects	English 10	Prep	English 9	Spanish 1	Spanish 2	Spanish 1
Mrs. Schweiger	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	Prep and Travel	Advanced Art	MS Art	HS Art

# Washington's Small School Districts



- ✓ **Many offer “dual credit” courses**
- ✓ **College in the High School**
- ✓ **Running Start**
- ✓ **Tech Prep**
- ✓ **Advanced Placement (AP)**

# Washington's Small School Districts



**The majority of Washington State rural schools are small. These rural school districts collectively have higher graduation rates and low dropout rates.**

***CENTER for RESEARCH & DATA ANALYSIS***

***Capital Region ESD 113***

# Washington's Small School Districts



Washington State had 25 schools that graduated 100% of their **Class of 2013** cohort on-time in 4 years & 76% (n=19) of them were in small rural school districts.

*CENTER for RESEARCH & DATA ANALYSIS*

*Capital Region ESD 113*

# Washington's Small School Districts



✓ Despite significant challenges, our small schools are doing amazing work

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Originally published April 8, 2011 at 3:18 PM | Page modified April 8, 2011 at 8:31 PM

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## Bridgeport High is finalist for Obama speech

Bridgeport High School in north central Washington serves a student body that is mostly Hispanic and poor, yet manages to send the vast majority of its graduates to college or technical school. That has made the rural school one of six finalists to have President Barack Obama deliver its commencement address in June.

By **NICHOLAS K. GERANIOS**

**SPOKANE** — Bridgeport High School in north central Washington serves a student body that is mostly Hispanic and poor, yet manages to send the vast majority of its graduates to college or technical school.

That has made the rural school one of six finalists to have President Barack Obama deliver its commencement address in June.

Students submitted essays and a video as part of a nationwide Race to the Top competition, beating out hundreds of competitors to become one of six finalists. The others are Wayne Early Middle College High in Goldsboro, N.C.; Booker T. Washington High in Memphis, Tenn.; Science Park High in Newark; Pittsburgh School for Creative and Performing Arts in Pittsburgh; and High Tech High International in San Diego.

"I want to congratulate the six finalists for all they've done to prepare their students for college and careers," Obama said in a statement.

Bridgeport is a town of about 2,400 people located along the Columbia River about 150 miles west of Spokane, in Douglas County. The area is known for abundant fruit orchards, including apples, cherries and pears, and is also adjacent to giant Chief Joseph Dam.

Like much of the central part of Washington, Bridgeport has become home to many Hispanics in the past decade. Bridgeport is about 75 percent Hispanic. Many of the new residents are lured by seasonal agriculture work.

Bridgeport students submitted essays and a video as part of a nationwide competition to win the presidential visit. The topic was how their school prepares them for college and careers.

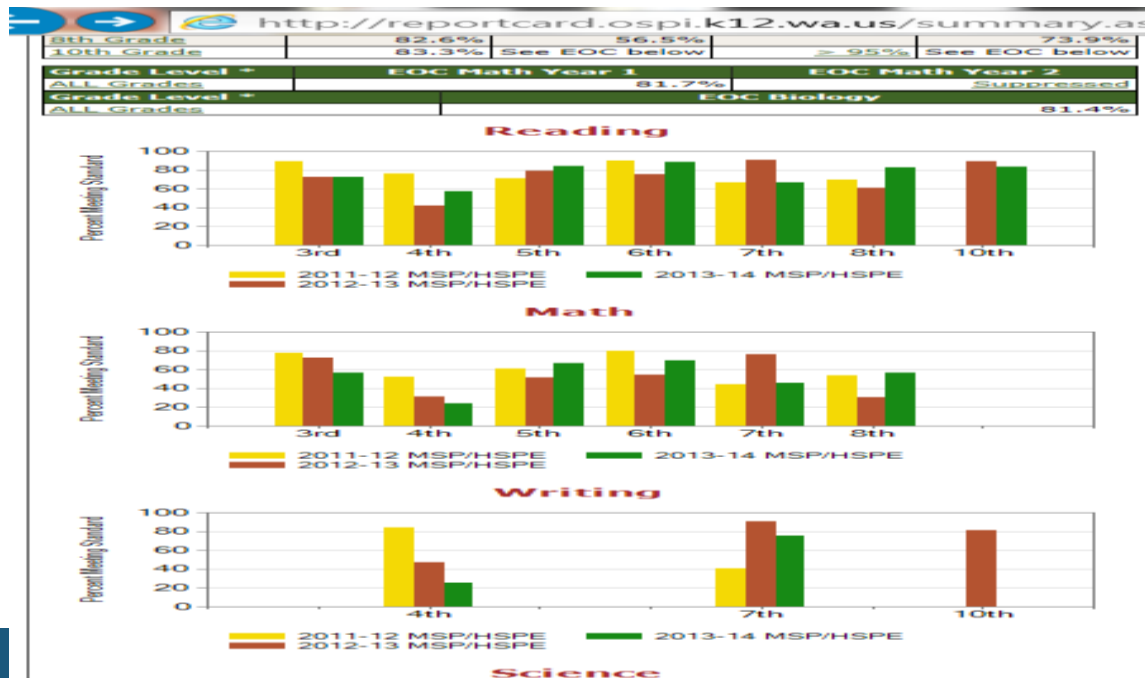
Bridgeport High School has about 200 students, and a graduating class of 35, principal Tamra Jackson said Friday. About 90 percent of the students are Hispanic, and every student in the school is on the free lunch program, Jackson said. Many are the first in their families to go to high school, she said. A large



# Washington's Small School Districts



- ✓ **Very high degree of transparency**
  - ✓ **Elementary:** Many of our small school districts have one teacher per grade level
  - ✓ **Secondary:** Many of our small districts have one high school teacher per academic subject



# Washington's Small School Districts



## Highly Dependent on Small High Funding

- ✓ Small district high schools with enrollments less than 300 receive enhanced funding
- ✓ This funding enables a small high school to offer a comprehensive program so that students can be offered required courses for graduation

# Washington's Small School Districts



## Very dependent on services from the Educational Service Districts

- ✓ Fiscal services support
- ✓ Professional development
- ✓ Cooperatives:
  - ✓ Special Ed.
  - ✓ Technology
  - ✓ Workers' Comp
  - ✓ Nurse's Corp
  - ✓ Cooperatives
  - ✓ Grant Writing and Management

# Washington's Small School Districts



- Administrators Wear Many Hats
  - Bill Wadlington, Creston School District
    - ✦ Superintendent
    - ✦ Principal – K-12
    - ✦ Curriculum Director
    - ✦ Bus Driver (Field Trips)
    - ✦ Junior High Football Coach
    - ✦ Title 1 & LAP Director
    - ✦ Special Ed. Director
    - ✦ Human Resources Director



# Washington's Small School Districts

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- ✓ Most small schools have a “no cut” policy for extra-curricular and co-curricular activities
  - ✓ Athletics
  - ✓ Clubs
  - ✓ A high percentage of students participate

# Washington's Small School Districts



## **In desperate need of state funded professional development for staff**

- ✓ Districts are required to implement significant reform, yet we use levy dollars to fund training for our staff
- ✓ Learning Improvement Days are no longer funded by the State
- ✓ Advantage of being small: we can get all of our staff in one room!



# Washington's Small School Districts



## **Many are very dependent on levy equalization funds**

- ✓ Most of our small and rural schools are located in “property poor” areas
- ✓ LEA funds are vital and essential to our small districts

# Requests from Small Districts



- ✓ Please do not give us more mandates
- ✓ Allow us time to **deeply implement and prepare our staff and students** for:
  - ✓ TPEP
  - ✓ Common Core State Standards
  - ✓ Smarter Balanced Assessments
  - ✓ Next Gen Science Standards
  - ✓ Increased Graduation Requirements

# Washington's Small School Districts



- ✓ Teachers and support staff are feeling overwhelmed with the amount of reform in our schools.
- ✓ This is not a complaint. It is a reality.
- ✓ Please visit our schools...every chance you get!

# Washington's Small School Districts



## Meeting Highly Qualified Teacher (HQT) Requirements is a Significant Challenge

### Recommendation:

- Allow the use of the HOUSSE form/process that was permissible until August 31, 2014.

Note: In 2013, the U.S. Department of Education strongly encouraged the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to limit the use of the HOUSSE form in all areas with the exception of special education. The effective date for limiting district use of the Points-Based HOUSSE was August 31, 2014..

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Questions?